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Theoretical foundation for the formulation of a National Information Policy for South Africa

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List of abbreviations

ADF	African Development Forum
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
ANC	African National Congress
BMR	Bureau of Market Research
CABECA	Capacity Building in Electronic Communications for Development in Africa
ComTask	Taskforce on Communication
EC	European Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FID	International Federation for Information and Documentation
GCIS	Government Communications and Information Service
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution program
GIE	Global Information Economy
GII	Global Information Infrastructure
GPI	General Information Programme
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IBM	International Business Machines
ICPC	Inter-departmental Co-ordinating and Planning Committee
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IDRC	Canadian International Development Research Centre
IITF	Information Infrastructure Taskforce
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IPCU	Information Policy and Co-ordination Unit
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IRM	Information Resources Management
IS	Information Society
ISAD	Information Society and Development Conference
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Network
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
LDC	Less Developed Country
LIS	Library and Information Services
LIWO	Library and Information Workers Organisation
MAMPU	Malaysian Modernisation and Planning Unit
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
NACLI	National Advisory Council for Libraries and Information
NATIS	National Information Systems
NCLIS	National Commission on Libraries and Information Services
NECC	National Education Co-ordination Committee

NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure
NII	National Information Infrastructure
NIP	National Information Policy
NIS	National Information System
NITA	National Information Technology Agenda
NITC	National Information Technology Council
NITF	National Information Technology Forum
NREN	National Research and Education Network
NTF	National Telecommunications Forum
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PADIS	Pan African Development Information System
PGI	General Information Programme
PICTA	Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SA	South Africa
SABINET	South African Bibliographic Information Network
SAC	Scientific Advisory Council
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAILIS	South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science
SAITIS	South African ICT Sector Development Framework
SALA	South African Library Association
SAPT	South African Posts and Telecommunications service
SATRA	South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
SITA	State Information Technology Agency
SLA	Special Libraries Association
Translis	Transforming Our Library and Information Services
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNISIST	Intergovernmental Programme for Co-operation in the Field of Scientific and Technological Information
USA	United States of America
USA	Universal Service Agency
VAN	Value Added Network
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWW	World Wide Web

Samevatting/ Ekserp

Hierdie studie het ten doel om die belangrikheid en vereistes van 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid vanaf 'n Inligtingkundige oogpunt te bespreek. Die studie is uit 'n holistiese oogpunt benader en probeer om alle faktore en verwante beleide wat invloed op 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid uitoefen te bespreek. Die konsep "Inligting" word in Derde Wêreld lande vanuit 'n unieke sosiale, ekonomiese, politiese en kulturele agtergrond aangepak. Met dit in gedagte, word die formulering van 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid hier as 'n proses om inligting as hulpbron te bestuur, benader. Die bestuur van inligting as 'n hulpbron is dus 'n baie belangrike funksie vir die owerhede. Die studie fokus op die volgende:

- Wat 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid behels.
- Redes hoekom 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid benodig word, die geskilpunte en beleidsbeginsels.
- Moontlike voorstelle en metodes om 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid in Suid-Afrika te implementeer word ook bespreek.

Weerstand vanaf die Derde Wêreld teenoor buitelandse en westerse betrokkenheid word ondervind. Dit is dus belangrik dat oplossings vanuit die Derde Wêreld self kom. 'n Ideaal waarna gestreef word is dat die leiding ten opsigte van die formulering van 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid vanuit Suid-Afrika sal kom vir toepassing in die res van Afrika. Voorstelle word dus gemaak vir die formulering van 'n Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid in Suid-Afrika binne die weier raamwerk van tradisionele inligtingverskaffing en inligtingdienslewering. Die tradisionele rol moet ook nuwe dienste, bekwaamhede, en die gebruik van nuwe inligtingsbronne en programme in ag neem. Die uiteindelike doel is dat Derde Wêreld lande self die waarde van inligting besef en hulle eie Nasionale Inligtingsbeleid formuleer. Sodoende word foute uit die verlede herstel, beter gebalanseerde dienste word verskaf en beter ko-ordinering vind plaas wat tot meer toegang tot inligting lei. Die gevolg is dat

profesioneel opgeleide mense inligting kan bestuur en gebruik om Afrika se sosio-ekonomiese probleme op te los.

Summary/ Abstract

This study endeavours to produce an understanding of the necessity for a National Information Policy from an Information Science point of view. The study was approached from a holistic point of view and thus tries to encompass all factors and related policies that would influence the formulation of a National Information Policy. The concept of information in developing countries operates within a broader social, economic, political and cultural background. The formulation of a National Information Policy should however conform to certain information management principles and is thus treated as a process for managing information, a vital function for any successful government. In the empirical research the theory is applied to describe the fundamentals of policies and their necessity. The study focuses on:

- Exploration of what a National Information Policy encompasses.
- Principles of information, issues and reasons making such a policy a necessity.
- Possible proposals, approaches, and means of implementing a National Information Policy for South Africa are discussed.

From a Third World perspective resistance may be detected towards external and foreign involvement or models. Greater care should thus be given to indigenous practices, but with the necessary guidance, so that a correct balance can be created. It is therefore essential that the seed be planted, guidance given and that the process be driven from within the country in order to be successful. The ideal would be if this guidance could come from an African country such as South Africa. A National Information Policy should be formulated within a broader framework of meeting the traditional information provision needs and services. The traditional role should however also be extended to make provision for new services, skills and the utilisation of new information sources and programmes. The ultimate goal is for Third World countries to realise the value of information and develop their own concept of a National Information Policy. This is done in order to address the disparities of the past, improve and develop balanced services,

create better co-ordination, facilitate access and have adequate and professionally trained human resources. This will lead to better management and use of information to ultimately solve Africa's socio-economic problems. Conclusions and recommendations are thus formulated to act as a guideline for the proposed formulation of such a policy for South Africa.